

Traditional Welsh Cawl (In honor of St. David of Wales Feast Day)

Cawl is the national dish of Wales. Welsh Cawl is a stew and made from bacon, Welsh lamb or beef, cabbage and leeks. Though more traditionally cheaper cuts of lamb are used, be warned Welsh recipes for Cawl vary from region to region and sometimes even season to season. There is no hard and fast rule.

Cawl can be eaten in one bowl, though often the broth will be served first followed by the meat and vegetables.

The flavors in Welsh Cawl do improve for keeping for a day or two, so don't be afraid to make it in advance or save any leftovers for reheating

Ingredients

1 tbsp lard or bacon fat
2 large onions, thickly sliced
1 medium swede, peeled and cut into 1"/2.5 cm cubes
4 large carrots, peeled thickly sliced.
4 leeks, cleaned and sliced
1 lb/ 450g potatoes, peeled and quartered
1 lb/450g brisket of beef
1 lb/ 450g piece of smoked bacon, cut in to 1"/2.5 cm cubes
1 bay leaf
Sprig fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground pepper.
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Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 150 minutes

Total Time: 180 minutes
Yield: Serves 4

Preparation

Melt the lard in a large stock pan over a high heat, take care not to burn the fat. Add all the vegetables except the potatoes, to the hot fat and brown for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon and keep to one side.

Raise the heat and add the beef to the pan and brown on all sides. Return the browned vegetables to the pan with the bacon pieces and herbs.

Cover the meat and vegetables with cold water, bring to the boil, then lower the heat to keep the water simmering and cook for 2 hours, or until the beef is tender.

Lift the beef from the pan and keep to one side. Add the potatoes and bring back to the boil and cook for another 20 mins, or until the potatoes are cooked. Meanwhile, once the beef is cool enough to handle, cut into 2"/5cm cubes. Once the potatoes are cooked, add the beef back to the pot and cook for a further 10 minutes.

Season well with salt and pepper and serve while piping hot. The broth from the pot can be served first as a soup, followed by the meat and vegetables, the choice is yours.

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